

workpiece," as recited in independent claims 27, 28, 30, 38, and 39. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 27, 28, 30, 38 and 39 is respectfully requested.

Claims 29, 31, 32, and 40-43 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 27, 28, 30, 38, and 39 for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 27-32 and 38-43 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 31, 32 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Livesay and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,652,157 to Hirano et al. ("Hirano"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 31, 32, and 43 depend from independent claims 27, 28, and 30 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 31, 32, and 43 is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 27-32 and 38-43 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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